



# The Lifesaver Spay Neuter Program.

Project #  
17-207

County: Garrett County

<b>Number of Cats Spayed:</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>Number of Dogs Spayed:</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Number of Cats Neutered:</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>Number of Dogs Neutered:</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Amount Received: \$46,285</b>	<b>Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$62.59</b>
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### Project Synopsis:

The Lifesaver Program targeted low-income pet owners in Garrett and Allegany Counties and proposed to perform no-cost surgeries for 500 pets, 300 cats and 200 dogs.



### Project Description:

HART is an animal welfare organization, founded in 2003, to stop the euthanasia of healthy animals at the Garrett County Shelter. At first, HART's objective was to rescue the animals and transport them to larger areas where they could be adopted. In spite of a network of volunteers who used their own cars to transport the animals, the number of animals received at the shelter continued to increase, peaking at 1,317 in 2007. To create a long-term solution to the problem, HART launched its capital fundraising campaign to build its own animal center. Fundraising took longer than expected and the number of animals arriving at the shelter continued to increase, reaching almost 1,500 in 2009. HART opened a low-cost spay/neuter clinic with the help of two volunteer veterinarians, and operated it for 3 years. During that time, it provided 4,781 surgeries for owned pets. As successful as the HART store-front clinic was, there were still hundreds of pets belonging to people who could not afford even the reduced cost of the surgeries at the HART Clinic. In 2014, when HART finished its animal adoption center, which includes a full-service clinic, it applied to the Maryland Department of Agriculture for a grant to provide no-cost surgeries to low-income pet owners. (The pictures above, from left to right, are Dr. Jessy Vandevender using the microscope to examine a blood smear; the entrance to the Bredel Clinic at the HART Animal Center; and a patient on the table during surgery, connected to the blood pressure monitor.)

### Summary of Approach:

Through its experience in operating the Spay/Neuter Clinic, HART knew that there were three important elements that had to be included in a comprehensive program: outreach, process, and data collection. Based on the comments made by many of the pet owners who came to the low-cost clinic, there was another important component: they wanted to be treated as if their pets mattered. We understand that and treat them and their pets with the same degree of respect that we give to full-paying clients. We also have a



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straightforward process, which allows them to apply by filling out an application and submitting it with their proof of income.

HART maintains continuous visibility with posters deployed at post offices, supermarkets and businesses, as well as Public Service Announcements in the local radio. and press releases. HART's outreach continues even after three years of participating in the program and it is now augmented by word of mouth spread by clients from previous years.

**Accomplishments:**

Thanks to the MDA spay and neuter grant in 2017, HART was able to perform a total of 510 surgeries for pets of residents in our two mountain counties. We were also able to acquire badly needed equipment, including a tablet microscope to replace our aging one, an infusion pump, a refractometer, and a non-invasive blood pressure oscillometer. This equipment has allowed the clinic staff to very effectively monitor the patient's condition during induction and surgery. This final report includes the receipt for the blood pressure oscillometer (with oxymeter).

**Lessons Learned:**

In 2017, we reaffirmed lessons learned in previous years. We have had the unique opportunity of acquiring hard data on the effect of providing no-cost spay/neuter surgeries: we have seen a reduction of 23% in the number of dogs arriving at the shelter. And we have been able to use that data to identify that there is an ongoing problem with what are called 'barn cats' in our community. Barn cats do not actually belong to the property owners - they are cats that perform the service of controlling the mouse population in exchange for a roof over their heads and food. Unfortunately, that shelter and food result in multiple litters of kittens every summer, produced by cats that are semi-feral but extremely fertile. In 2017, the multiple kitten litters resulted in the transport of 461 cats, and the adoption of another 112. HART is currently investigating feasible ways of encouraging the cooperation of property owners to reduce the number of barn cat litters..

**Attachments:**

Lists of animals neutered or spayed in October, November and December.

**For More Information Contact:**

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